

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

MANUAL OF ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR CANADIAN PROGRAMS OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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CSLA Accreditation Council | LAAC
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i. Introduction and Minimum Requirements

This document contains the Accreditation Standards for the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Council (LAAC). These published standards are intended to ensure that the essential educational components leading to entry-level professional competence are continuously achieved by programs offering first professional degrees in landscape architecture. The Procedures governing application of the Standards are contained in the companion document, Manual of Accreditation Procedures for Canadian Programs of Landscape Architectural Education.

1. Standard One - Program Mission, Goals and Objectives

The professional program shall have a clearly defined mission supported by goals appropriate to the profession of landscape architecture and the Core Values of the LAAC, and that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. The program shall demonstrate progress toward the attainment of its mission and goals.

INTENT: A clear and concise mission statement summarizes the intent, the objectives, and the needs that the program seeks to fulfill and also provides a benchmark for assessing how well the program is meeting the stated objectives.

A. Program Mission. The professional program shall have a mission statement which expresses the underlying purposes and values of the professional program; defines for the faculty, students, prospective students, and the institution its values and fundamental purpose; and summarizes why the professional program exists.

Assessment: Does the program have a clearly stated mission reflecting the purpose and values of the program and does it relate to the institution's mission statement and address the LAAC Standards' Core Values?¹

B. Educational Goals and Objectives. The professional program shall have clearly defined and formally stated academic goals that reflect the mission and demonstrate that attainment of the goals will fulfill the professional program mission.

Assessment 1: Does the professional program have clearly defined and achievable educational goals and objectives that specifically describe how each of the academic goals will be achieved?

Assessment 2: Does the professional program have a regularly used effective procedure to assess and determine progress in meeting its goals and objectives?

Assessment 3: Does the professional program provide benchmarks for assessing and advancing the professional program in meeting the stated goals and objectives?

C. Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The professional program shall demonstrate—through concrete steps—systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts to incorporate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion through its program. The program shall provide a learning environment that prepares students with a broad range of cultural competencies to navigate a diverse professional world.

Assessment 1: Does the professional program define its under-represented populations, explain why these groups are of particular interest and importance to the professional program, and describe the process used to define the under-represented population(s). The professional program should take into consideration populations under-represented within the profession.

Assessment 2: Does the professional program describe its specific goals for increasing the representation and retention of under-represented population(s) among students, faculty, and staff; the actions and strategies it has identified to advance those goals; and its method for measuring success?

Assessment 3: Does the professional program demonstrate its commitment to advance diversity and cultural competency through a variety of practices including the development and/or implementation of policies that advance and support a welcoming climate of equity and inclusion that is free of harassment, aggressions, and discrimination?

¹ It is recognized that Mission Statements will often vary between programs, reflecting specific regional factors and/or the particular academic focus of the parent institution.

D. Commitment to Reconciliation. The program demonstrates its alignment with its university commitment, responsibilities, and implementation of reconciliation actions. The program – through concrete steps – demonstrates systematic, coherent, and long-term efforts to incorporate reconciliation, UNDRIP, and in advancing the truth as a step toward reconciliation.

Assessment 1: Does the professional program's Strategic Plan align with commitments to Truth and Reconciliation made by the University?

Assessment 2: Does the professional program demonstrate its commitment to advance awareness of landscape architecture and its role in truth, reconciliation, and UNDRIP?

E. Strategic Planning Process. The professional program shall engage in a strategic planning process that reflects short and long-term planning and a program assessment process.

Assessment 1: Does the strategic plan describe how the program mission, goals and objectives will be met over the various planning horizons and document the review and evaluation process?

Assessment 2: Is the strategic plan reviewed and revised periodically and does it present realistic and attainable methods for advancing the academic mission?

Assessment 3: Does the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) respond to the previous accreditation recommendations (if applicable) and does it report on efforts to rectify identified weaknesses?

F. Program Disclosure. A professional program shall accurately disclose the following information about each landscape architecture degree in its literature and promotional media and on its website:

- a. the professional program's mission, objectives, and goals, accreditation status,
- b. estimated cost of attendance, including fellowship, assistantship, and scholarship opportunities and other financial support options to reduce the cost of attending,
- c. student retention and graduation rates,
- d. number of degrees granted per year,
- e. percentage of students with timely graduation,
- f. list of required materials and equipment and provides an estimated cost as well as available shared resources or alternative access,
- g. supplemental and experiential learning opportunities with associated costs,
- h. post-graduation employment,
- i. number of licensed faculty, and
- j. disclose whether the program meets the educational requirements for licensure or professional membership eligibility in each province.

Assessment 1: Is the program information accurate and easily accessible to the public?

Assessment 2: Does the program literature and promotional media and website accurately describe the required information?

2. Standard Two - Program Autonomy, Governance & Administration

The program shall have the authority and resources to achieve its mission, goals and objectives.

INTENT: Landscape architecture should be recognized as a discrete professional program with sufficient financial and institutional support and authority to enable achievement of the stated program mission, goals and objectives.

A. Program Administration. Landscape architecture shall be administered as an identifiable, discrete program within its institution and is so noted in the program title and degree(s) offered.

Assessment 1: Is the program a discrete and identifiable program within the institution?

Assessment 2: Does the program title and degree description incorporate the term "Landscape Architecture"?

Assessment 3: Does the Program Administrator hold a full academic appointment in landscape architecture?

Assessment 4: Does the Program Administrator exercise effective leadership and management functions for the professional program? (Where the program administrator is not the primary administrator for the academic unit, as in a landscape architecture program within a multidisciplinary department or school, the landscape architecture leader has the authority to significantly influence the management of resources, including budget, faculty review, tenure and promotion outcomes, and the direction of the professional program.)

B. Institutional Support. The institution shall provide sufficient resources to enable the professional program to achieve its mission and goals, and it shall support individual faculty development and advancement.

Assessment 1: Is funding available to assist faculty and other instructional personnel with continued professional development including support in developing funded grants, attendance at conferences and provision of computers and appropriate software, other types of equipment, and technical support?

Assessment 2: Is funding adequate² for student support, such as scholarships, work-study jobs?

Assessment 3: Are adequate³ support personnel available to accomplish the professional program's mission and goals?

C. Commitment to Inclusiveness and Diversity. The program demonstrates commitment to inclusiveness and diversity through its recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students.

Assessment 1: Does the program demonstrate a commitment to diversity in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff?

Assessment 2: Does the program demonstrate this commitment to diversity throughout its student's full academic progress?

² It is acknowledged that the "adequacy" of funding is difficult to objectively evaluate. It is expected that the Visiting Team's interview process with faculty and students will expose deficiencies, as will the Self Evaluation Report's review of these funding levels compared to other disciplines and programs within the institution.

³ It is acknowledged that the "adequacy" of support personnel is difficult to objectively evaluate. It is expected that the Self Evaluation Report, and faculty interviews, will reveal shortcomings in support that unreasonably divert faculty from their principal roles in course preparation, instruction and research. The program may also clarify this question in the Self Evaluation Report by providing comparisons with other disciplines and programs within the institution.

3. Standard Three - Professional Curriculum

The first-professional degree curriculum shall include the Core Values of these Standards, the knowledge, skills, and competencies of landscape architecture, and the learning goals stated by the professional program.

- a. In addition to the professional curriculum, a first-professional degree program at the Bachelor's level shall provide an educational context enriched by other disciplines, including but not limited to: humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, as well as opportunities for students to develop other areas of interest.*
- b. In addition to the professional curriculum, a first-professional degree at the Master's level shall provide instruction in and application of research and or/scholarly methods.*

INTENT: The purpose of the curriculum is to achieve the learning goals stated in the professional program's mission statement. Curriculum objectives should relate to the program's mission and specific learning outcomes. The curriculum encompasses coursework and other co-curricular opportunities intended to develop students' knowledge and skills in landscape architecture.

A. Curricular Expression of the Mission, Goals, and Core Values. The professional program shall integrate its mission, goals, and the Core Values into the curriculum.

Assessment1: Does the program identify the knowledge, abilities, and values it expects students to possess at graduation?

B. Learning Outcomes. A professional program shall establish learning outcomes that shall include competency in the following areas:

Knowledge

- I. Design Process, Principles and Theory
- II. Histories and Theories of the Art and Science of Landscape Architecture,
- III. Plants and Ecosystems
- IV. Resilience and Climate Change
- V. Legal Context of the Profession
- VI. Professional Practice

Skills and Competencies

- VII. Assessment
- VIII. Design and Construction
- IX. Communication
- X. Construction Materials and Methods
- XI. Landform, Hydrology and Green Infrastructure
- XII. Landscape Performance
- XIII. Collaboration
- XIV. Research (graduate level)

Specific criteria for each Learning Outcome and the required minimum level of achievement for each criterion are provided in the Curriculum Map template, Appendix C of the Manual of Accreditation Procedures.

Assessment 1: Do course materials and student work demonstrate achievement of the minimum level of achievement for each Learning Outcome criterion?

Assessment 2: Does the curriculum provide a balanced coverage of the designated subject matters and introduce the subject matter in a sequence that supports its goals and intended learning outcomes?

Assessment 3: Does student work and other accomplishments demonstrate that the curriculum is providing students with the appropriate content to assume an entry-level position in the profession?

Assessment 4: Do curriculum and program opportunities enable students to pursue personal academic interests consistent with institutional requirements and entry into the profession?

Assessment 5: Is the professional practice/ legal context of the profession inclusive of treaties, laws and policies impacting Indigenous peoples (such as 2023 UNDRIP Act).

C. Coursework (Bachelor's Level). In addition to the professional curriculum, students shall also pursue coursework in other disciplines and acquire an introduction to investigative and scholarly methods in accordance with institutional and program requirements.

Assessment 1: Do students take a broad range of courses in the humanities, natural and social sciences?

Assessment 2: Do students receive an introduction to investigative and scholarly methods appropriate to an undergraduate education?

D. Areas of Interest (Bachelor's Level). The program shall provide opportunities for students to pursue special interests.

Assessment 1: Does the program provide opportunities for students to pursue independent projects, focused electives, optional studios, certificates, minors, etc.?

Assessment 2: Does student work incorporate academic experiences reflecting a variety of pursuits beyond the basic curriculum?

E. Research and Scholarly Methods (Master's Level). The program provides advanced education in investigative and scholarly methods. Methods come from applied (including design) and scientific (basic) Programs should address research theories, methods, and outcomes connected to the expertise of the faculty and the mission of the program.

Assessment 1: Does the curriculum provide instruction in Research and Scholarly Methods and their relation to the profession of landscape architecture?

Assessment 2: Does the program demonstrate that theses or terminal projects exhibit creative and independent thinking and contain a significant research/scholarly component?

F. Augmentation of Formal Educational Experience. The program shall provide opportunities for students to participate in internships and exchange programs, off-campus studies, public service, research assistantships, or practicum experiences.

Assessment 1: Does the program provide any of these opportunities?

Assessment 2: How does the program identify the learning outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of these opportunities?

Assessment 3: Do students report on these experiences to their peers? If so, how?

G. Syllabi. Syllabi shall be maintained and distributed for courses.

Assessment 1: Are syllabi readily accessible and do they include the intended learning outcomes, course content, and the criteria and methods that will be used to evaluate student performance?

Assessment 2: Do syllabi and related assignments identify the various levels of accomplishment students shall achieve to complete the course successfully and advance in the curriculum?

Assessment 3: Do syllabi include a list of required and optional materials and equipment and provide an estimated cost as well as available shared resources or alternative access?

H. Curriculum Evaluation. The professional program shall define continuous, systematic, and well-documented curriculum evaluation procedures which include appropriate evaluation methods and metrics that allow the professional program to determine its effectiveness in advancing its learning objectives. The chosen evaluation methods and metrics shall track the professional program's progress in advancing its mission and goals, alignment with the Core Values, and promoting student competency.

Assessment 1: Does the program demonstrate and document ways of:

- a. Assessing students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the course and program?*
- b. Reviewing and improving the effectiveness of instructional methods in curriculum delivery?*
- c. Maintaining currency with evolving technologies, methodologies, theories and directions of the profession?*

Assessment 2: Do students participate in evaluation of the program, courses and curriculum?

I. Academic Integrity. The institution establishes and the professional program implements and demonstrates clear, specific policies related to student integrity and academic honesty in all course delivery methods.

Assessment 1: The professional program affirms that the student who takes an examination or submits project work is the same person who enrolled in the professional program and that the examination or project results will reflect the student's own knowledge and competence.

4. Standard Four - Student and Program Outcomes

The professional program shall prepare students—through educational programs, advising, mentoring, and other academic and professional opportunities—to pursue careers in landscape architecture upon graduation. The professional program shall foster the Core Values of these Standards and the knowledge, skills, and competencies embodied in the art and science of landscape architecture.

INTENT: Students should be prepared – through educational programs, advising, and other academic and professional opportunities – to pursue a career in landscape architecture upon graduation. Students should have demonstrated knowledge and abilities in creative problem-solving, critical thinking, communications, design implementation, other relevant professional skills and methods to allow them to enter the profession of landscape architecture.

A. Learning Outcomes. Upon completion of the program, students shall be qualified to pursue careers in landscape architecture.

Assessment 1: Does student work demonstrate the competency required for entry-level positions, as defined in the Curriculum Map template, in the profession of landscape architecture?

Assessment 2: Do students demonstrate their achievement of the required LAAC Learning Outcomes and the program's mission?

Assessment 3: Are alumni satisfied with the academic experience and preparation for professional practice?

B. Student Advising. The program shall provide students with effective advising and mentoring that recognizes and supports their individual circumstances and continues throughout their education.

Assessment 1: Are students effectively advised and mentored regarding academic development?

Assessment 2: Are students made aware of professional opportunities, licensure, professional development, advanced educational opportunities, and continuing education requirements associated with professional practice?

Assessment 3: Are students satisfied with the academic experiences and their preparation for the landscape architecture profession?

C. Student Experiences. In addition to curricular engagement, the professional program shall provide students with both an educational experience that considers the diverse needs and obligations of students, and also provides opportunities to learn about and grow within the profession of landscape architecture. The professional program shall provide students with an understanding of the role of the community in the profession and the profession in the community, the changing culture and environment of the profession, and competency regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Assessment 1: Does the institution provide opportunities for students to participate in institutional organizations, community initiatives, or other activities?

Assessment 2: Does the program provide opportunities for students to participate in events where they are exposed to the profession and the skills required in practice, such as: CSLA Annual Meetings; Component Association meetings and events; other associated professional societies or special interest groups; construction industry-related organizations; public lectures?

Assessment 3: Does the professional program provide students with opportunities to participate in service-learning activities which incorporate community-based collaboration and engagement, and which build cultural competence during their educational career.

Assessment 4: Does the educational structure of the professional program consider the varied needs and obligations of students, recognize, and affirm the importance of study/work-life balance, and seek to overcome barriers to student success?

5. Standard Five - Faculty

The qualifications, academic position, and professional practice activities of faculty and instructional personnel shall promote and enhance the academic mission and intended learning outcomes of the program.

INTENT: The professional program shall advance its program mission and objectives by means of promoting the qualifications, academic position, professional activities, and individual professional development of its faculty and instructional personnel. A professional program shall have qualified, experienced, and diverse faculty and other instructional personnel to instill the Core Values of these Standards and the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students will need to pursue a career in landscape architecture. It shall also have equitable faculty workloads and faculty and staff compensation within the program, and overall support for career development that contributes to the success of the professional program.

A. Credentials and Composition. The academic qualifications, professional experience and teaching skills of the faculty, instructional personnel, and teaching assistants are appropriate to their roles and the courses in which they provide instruction.

Assessment 1: Are qualifications appropriate to responsibilities of the professional program as defined by the institution?

Assessment 2: Are faculty assignments appropriate to the course content and program mission?

Assessment 3: Are faculty actively engaged in scholarly pursuits and/or professional activities and external service activities?

Assessment 4: Do faculty members have a variety of areas of academic focus so that a range of viewpoints is maintained?

Assessment 5: Is there a balanced mix of professors at different stages of career development?

Assessment 6: Does the faculty have a balance of professional practice and academic experience appropriate to the program mission?

Assessment 7: Does the professional program demonstrate recruitment and support of a diverse faculty?

B. Faculty Participation and Recognition. The faculty shall participate in program governance and administration.

Assessment 1: Do faculty members have voting privileges, academic freedom, and tenure opportunities consistent with the principles of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)?

Assessment 2: Does the faculty have the ability and responsibility to develop, implement, evaluate, and modify the professional program's curriculum and operating practices?

Assessment 3: Does the faculty make recommendations on the allocation of financial resources for capital improvements and upgrades?

Assessment 4: Does the program or institution adequately communicate and mentor faculty regarding policies, expectations, and procedures for annual evaluations, and for tenure and promotion to all ranks?

Assessment 5: Are faculty salary levels commensurate with those of other similar departments in the institution?

C. Faculty Number. The faculty shall be of a sufficient size to accomplish the professional program's goals and objectives, to teach the curriculum; to support students through advising and other functions; to engage in research, creative

activity, and scholarship; and, be actively involved in professional endeavours such as presenting at conferences. To address this criterion:

1. An academic unit that offers a single first-professional degree program at the Continuing Full Accreditation Status shall have an INSTRUCTIONAL FTE of at least five faculty.
2. An academic unit that offers first-professional degree programs at both the bachelor's and master's levels at the Continuing Full Accreditation Status shall have an INSTRUCTIONAL FTE of at least seven faculty.
3. Where faculty members have their responsibilities split between programs (such as bachelor's and master's or between landscape architecture and another discipline), the FTE assessment must be prorated in accordance with their teaching contribution to the accredited program.
4. At least 60% of INSTRUCTIONAL FTE shall be faculty members with full-time academic appointments.
5. The majority of instructional faculty shall hold professional degrees in landscape architecture.
6. The majority of the instructional faculty members shall be members of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, or an equivalent professional institution.
7. The Self-Evaluation Report shall include a discussion of the University's requirements for faculty and teaching staff numbers and composition.

Assessment 1: Is the minimum number of faculty, their academic qualifications, and employment status (i.e. Full-time vs. Part-time) in accordance with the above-noted requirements?

Assessment 2: Are student/faculty ratios in studios typically not greater than 15:1?

Assessment 3: Beyond achieving the specified minimums, is the faculty number adequately matched to student enrollment and is it of sufficient size to achieve the program's overall mission and goals and promote individual faculty development?

Assessment 4: Are the majority of the faculty members of the CSLA, or equivalent professional institution?

Assessment 5: Does the strategic plan or long-range plan include action item(s) for addressing the adequacy of the number and qualifications of faculty?

D. Faculty Development. The faculty shall be continuously engaged in activities leading to their professional growth and advancement, the advancement of the profession, the mission, goals, Core Values and the effectiveness of the professional program, and curriculum and course delivery methodology.

Assessment 1: Are faculty activities such as scholarly inquiry, research, professional practice, and service to the profession, university, and community documented and disseminated through appropriate media such as journals, professional magazines, community, college and university media?

Assessment 2: Do faculty teaching and administrative assignments allow sufficient opportunity to pursue advancement and professional development?

Assessment 3: Are the development, teaching effectiveness, and cultural competency of faculty and instructional personnel systematically evaluated through a student, peer and program review process and are the results used for individual and program improvement?

Assessment 4: Do faculty seek and make effective use of available funding for conference attendance, equipment and technical support, etc.?

Assessment 5: Are the activities of faculty recognized by faculty peers?

Assessment 6: Do faculty members participate in university and professional service, student advising and other activities that enhance the effectiveness of the professional program?

Assessment 7: Do faculty participate in a range of ongoing professional development opportunities such as career development; emerging issues in the profession; diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competency?

Assessment 8: Are faculty members actively connected to professional practice and / or practitioners?

6. Standard Six - Community Outreach and Public Service

The professional program shall have a plan for, and a record of, interaction with its alumni, the larger institution, the professional community, the local community, and the public at large.

INTENT: Each landscape architecture professional program shall establish an effective relationship with the larger institution, its alumni, practitioners, the local community, and the public at large in order to provide a source of service-learning opportunities for students, scholarly development for faculty, and professional guidance and financial support. Documentation and dissemination of successful outreach efforts shall enhance the image of the program and educate its constituencies regarding the program and the profession of landscape architecture.

A. Interaction with the Institution and the Public. The professional program shall represent and advocate for the profession by interacting with the larger institution, the local community including local First Nations, practitioners, the professional associations, and the public at large.

Assessment 1: Are community engagement and service-learning activities incorporated into the curriculum?

Assessment 2: Are community engagement and service-learning activities documented on a regular basis?

Assessment 3: Does the professional program interact with the institution to build awareness of the program; interact with both local, diverse, and historically underserved communities, and with the public at large to advance knowledge and understanding of landscape architecture; all in ways that builds students' cultural competence during their educational career?

Assessment 4: Does the program have strategies and / or protocols (or is developing strategies and / or protocols) for research and community outreach projects involving Indigenous participants, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and Indigenous cultural property?

B. Interaction with Alumni and Practitioners. The professional program engages alumni and practitioners as a resource to build the depth and capacity of the professional program.

Assessment 1: Does the professional program maintain or have access to a registry of alumni that includes information pertaining to current employment, professional activity, postgraduate study, and significant professional accomplishments?

Assessment 2: Does the professional program engage the alumni and practitioners in activities that include efforts to expand students' educational opportunities, mentoring, career advising and potential employment, curriculum review and development, service on a formal advisory board, fund raising, continuing education, design-review panels, design charrettes, and student awards?

Assessment 3: Does the professional program engage with alumni and practitioners in a way that reflects, supports, and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion, assists in the recruitment of students with diverse backgrounds, and provides students with experiences that expand their cultural competence for interacting with diverse communities?

Assessment 4: Does the professional program document, acknowledge and celebrate the significant professional accomplishments of its alumni and benefactors within the institution and the public at large?

7. Standard Seven - Facilities, Equipment, Libraries and Technology

The professional program shall provide faculty, students, and staff access to facilities, equipment, library resources, technologies, and other supports necessary for achieving the program's mission, goals, and program and LAAC Learning Outcomes.

INTENT: The professional program should occupy space in designated, accessible facilities that support the achievement of program mission and intended learning outcomes. Students, faculty, and staff should have the required tools and facilities to enable achievement of the program mission and intended learning outcomes.

A. Facilities. A professional program shall provide facilities and tools in designated, code-compliant universally accessible and adequately maintained spaces that serve the professional and educational requirements of the faculty, students and staff.

Assessment 1: Are faculty, staff and administration provided with appropriate office, presentation, and meeting space?

Assessment 2: Are students assigned sufficient space and facilities, meeting the diverse needs of students, to perform their work and are the hours of operation supportive of their educational needs?

Assessment 3: Are program facilities designed in a way that promotes and supports cooperative learning, design inquiry and creative expression?

Assessment 4: Are facilities adequately maintained and in compliance with the current Accessible Canada Act and applicable building codes?

B. Technologies and Related Equipment. The professional program shall provide to students, faculty, and other instructional and administrative personnel the software, information systems, and technical equipment needed to achieve its mission and goals.

Assessment 1: Does the professional program have information systems and technical equipment sufficient, accessible, equitable, and available to serve the diverse needs of faculty and students (e.g. computer workstations, internet access, software, printing/plotting, and model-making)?

Assessment 2: Do students have adequate access to technical support staff and instruction to support their work?

Assessment 3: Is the frequency of hardware and software maintenance, updating, and replacement sufficient?

Assessment 4: Does the program have a strategy for funding, maintaining, and advancing technology that supports learning?

Assessment 5: Are the hours of use sufficient to serve faculty and students?

C. Library Resources. The professional program shall provide access to a digital and/or physical library and/or specialized resources sufficient to support its mission, goals, and learning outcomes.

Assessment 1: Are collections adequate to support the professional program and include access to a broad cross-section of publications, periodicals, research, and other materials that reflect the diverse social, cultural, economic, political, and scientific forces that shape the art and science of landscape architecture?

Assessment 2: Do courses integrate library and other resources?

Assessment 3: Are the library hours of operation convenient, accessible, and adequate to serve the diverse needs of faculty and students?

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